

Family Health and Fitness



Awareness, Research, and What To Do

June is Family Health and Fitness Awareness Month. Research shows that active parents raise active children and that health and fitness should be a major priority in a family's daily schedule to keep heart disease at bay. One hour of moderate activity every day will help a child maintain a healthy weight and keep their hearts, brains, and bodies healthy.

An hour of activity a day may seem like a lot, though there are many ways to incorporate activity into a family's daily routine.

Setting time for a daily walk, or bike ride can help keep activity levels up and add adventure to your family's everyday life.

Scheduled days to visit a park during the week for a walk or a game of tag increases activity levels while adding fun and encouraging structure.

Offer active toys as gifts such as balls, skateboards, jump ropes, and kites. Anything that will get the child outside and active. It is even better if the gift encourages play with -



friends. This increases the health benefit reach, while encouraging social growth.

Setting daily chores such as raking the leaves, and shoveling the snow, will keep your home tidy and keep the entire family active.

Starting a family garden can give a reason to be outside every day, staying active, learning about the food system, and encouraging healthy eating habits.

Nutrition is the other half of staying healthy. Activity increases the metabolism, and diet is the fuel your metabolism uses. Healthy foods keep the body healthy, and helps increase energy levels, making time with the family even more fun!

The Challenge

The American Heart Association made a challenge to make family health more interesting.

The Life is Why Family Health Challenge includes:

Week 1 - “My Cart is Why”

Try eating a variety of fruit and vegetables every day. Let your children choose new fruits and vegetables to try at the grocery store to make healthy eating more exciting.

Week 2 - “My Glass is Why”

Stop drinking sugary drinks. Sugary drinks cost your family energy and health, try drinking more milk and water. Sugar-free sparkling water, unsweetened tea, or water with added lemon or berries are also healthy choices.

Week 3 “ My Taste is Why”

Most adults eat more than double the amount of sodium recommended. Slowly reduce the amount of sodium in homemade meals. Replace the salt with spices and herbs. Maybe even fresh herbs from the family garden!

Week 4 - “My Movement is Why”

Incorporate aerobic activity into your family's life. From passing a soccer ball outside, to keeping a balloon in the air in the living room.



This challenge is designed to encourage accomplishment and life adventure. Each challenge will encourage the entire family to make heart-healthy decisions a part of their everyday life, for the rest of their lives!

The Change

Adapting homemade family meals to be heart-healthy can be easy too!

Choose whole-wheat breads, and brown rice to go into your meals. This will increase the fiber intake of the entire family.

Use more olive, or canola oil instead of butter in cooking. This will decrease the bad fat intake and increase good fat intake all around.

Eat more chick and fish than beef to decrease cholesterol levels, reducing the risk for heart disease and stroke throughout your entire family life!



Read food nutrition labels while shopping and choose the healthiest choices.

The options with the lowest sodium levels, lowest sugar levels, lowest fat levels, and highest fiber levels.

Check the serving sizes your family is eating. The amount you are currently preparing could be too much for the activity levels of some or everyone.

Choose healthy snacks such as fruits, vegetables, popcorn, or trail mix.

Establishing these lifestyle changes will make you a good advocate for your kids. Remember, your children will most likely copy what you do, so be good!





“A Full 12 Lead ECG will show if there are any signs of heart disease, define, and locate it. That information will help you identify the current cardiovascular state of your patients heart, and affect what diet or exercise program you may recommend to your patient. You will want to monitor your patient’s heart alongside any programs you may recommend to your patient over time.” - Roger E. Nasiff Ph.D.



Resources

[How to Get Your Family Active - AHA](#)

[Daily Tips to Help Keep Your Family Active - AHA](#)

[Life is Why Family Health Challenge - AHA](#)

[Daily Tips to Help Your Family Eat Better - AHA](#)

[Nutrition Basics - AHA](#)
